

# Viewpoint: League of Women Voters is political, not partisan

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As another election season approaches, the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County is taking this opportunity to clear up some inaccuracies and misconceptions provided to and reported by the local press.

From its founding in 1920, the league has followed stringent protocols to ensure that we function as a political organization supporting policies and programs deemed necessary for keeping a democracy inclusive and vibrant — which it currently is not. “Political” is not to be confused with “partisan”; we are not aligned with any political party, nor do we ever endorse or oppose a particular candidate as an organization. Women’s rights, systemic racism, and climate change, for example, are not partisan issues; they are quality-of-life issues for all Americans.

As a national organization, founded over 100 years ago, we do not take a stand on any issue until we reach consensus among our members in over 700 communities across the U.S — in so-called “red” and “blue” states. All have an equal voice in the decision to support or oppose a position; the process is laborious and even painful at times, but we continue to research and discuss the issue at hand until all can accept the outcome. It is a microcosm of how democracy should work, rather than a partisan platform being handed down for others to blindly support without engaging in critical thinking. Our Congress would do well to consider this model rather than the partisan divide currently plaguing our governance.

We attract members because we are nonpartisan. We suspect we've had people of all political parties, ages, and genders in leadership roles. However, we do not solicit, collect or maintain such data on any member. Any such information being distributed is unauthorized and unverified.

Our volunteers organize and conduct candidate forums each year to allow voters the opportunity to evaluate candidates' suitability to serve. (Note: Because the league tries to avoid divisive politics, we no longer use the term "debate.") When COVID prevented safe gatherings, we moved to online forums. Our goal is always to empower voters to make informed decisions, which is why questions are solicited from the audience. We applaud everyone who wants to serve in any office, especially those who participate in these forums. Those who decline are denying potential constituents their right to cast an informed ballot — the very foundation of any representative government.

We are a highly transparent organization as well. We have an extensive online presence, including a comprehensive website where our consensus process and related positions are posted. Our "Member Resources" page is open to nonmembers as well. We invite you to check us out at [www.lwvsaratoga.org/member-resources](http://www.lwvsaratoga.org/member-resources). And consider joining our growing membership of those who believe this country can and should do better in achieving justice and equity under the law for all citizens.

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